


Teacher Gun Rights Fire Up Both Sides in Ore., Michigan

The issue of whether teachers should be permitted  [Back to Story](#) to carry guns in schools has once again triggered heated debate among educators and lawmakers, this time in Oregon and Michigan.

The Oregon case involves a lawsuit filed by a high school teacher in the 12,400-student Medford school district who contends she should be allowed to carry a licensed concealed weapon on campus.

The teacher, who has a restraining order against her ex-husband, denied to authorities that she was carrying a gun at school. But she filed suit in the Jackson County Circuit Court on Sept. 18, under the pseudonym "Jane Doe," claiming that her concealed-weapons permit should allow her to carry a gun on school grounds.

Oregon law allows anyone with a concealed-weapons license to carry guns into public buildings, but most school districts have rules barring employees from carrying weapons onto school grounds.

"It is absolutely legal for her to carry a gun," said Kevin Starrett, the executive director of the Canby, Ore.-based Oregon Firearms Federation, which is paying for the teacher's lawsuit. "The education establishment... is eager to protect anyone from sexual harassment, but when a teacher wants to protect herself, they're willing to throw her under a bus."

But Tim C. Gerking, a lawyer for the Medford district, said its policy against carrying guns is intended "to foster a healthy and safe working and learning environment for the student population."

In Michigan, meanwhile, state Rep. David Agema, a Republican, has introduced a bill that would give districts the option of allowing a teacher with firearm certification to have access to a registered gun on school grounds.

"We have recent federal reports that al-Qaida is targeting our schools, which are sitting targets," said Trevor Z. Pittsley, a spokesman for Rep. Agema. "This bill is not at all about guns. It's about keeping our kids safe."

But some parents and other lawmakers reject that.

"Guns have no place in our schools," said Rep. Robert Jones, a Democrat. He said the bill reflects "a regressive way of looking at and dealing with society."

By [Katie Ash](#)